

ECOSYSTEM-BASED OCEANS MANAGEMENT

An Arctic Council project on ecosystem-based oceans management seeks to ensure sustainable development and protection of the Arctic marine environment.

The “Best Practices in Ecosystem-Based Oceans Management (BePOMAr)” project was initiated in 2007. It is a response to the the aggregate effects of multiple uses of the oceans, which call for a holistic, ecosystems-based approach to oceans management. Examples of such use of the oceans are fishing, transportation, petroleum development and waste disposal. The project has identified *core elements* of what the Arctic countries are currently doing in implementing an ecosystem-based approach to oceans management.



The objective of the project is to present the concepts and practices the Arctic countries have developed in this field. By reviewing how countries actually put such concepts and practices to use, lessons have been drawn on how to do ecosystems-based oceans management. Such lessons can foster mutual learning and understanding.

The project concludes that flexible application of effective ecosystem-based oceans management is necessary, and that decision-making must be integrated and science-based. National commitment is required, and stakeholders and Arctic residents must participate. Adaptive management is critical, and it is necessary to have area-based approaches and transboundary perspectives.

The need for oceans management based on an ecosystem approach is widely recognized by the international community. This is reflected in calls for such an approach to be effected by 2010 by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), in recommendations from the UN General Assembly, in the work under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and in the 2001 Reykjavik Declaration on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem. These international commitments are particularly important in the Arctic region, and the Arctic Council BePOMAr project represents a contribution to progress towards the WSSD goals.

The project has resulted in a report which contains a series of case studies explaining how ecosystems-based oceans management is carried out in the Arctic countries. The report may be found at <http://brage.bibsys.no/npolar> (search for "Best practices").

